

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D MAY 20th 1761.

AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE REVEREND

MR. *ELIAB STONE*,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN

R E A D I N G.

By *MATTHEW BRIDGE*, A.M. K

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FRAMINGHAM.

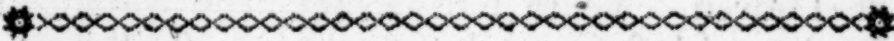
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A N

Ordination SERMON.



2 CORINTHIAN iv. 5.

WE preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.—

THE Goodness of God is discovered, not only in providing happiness for the chosen race, but in the methods taken to communicate the purchased blessedness to the happy subjects of it. Should the great and terrible Jehovah speak immediately to us, as he did to the Israelites in the days of Moses, it would throw us into the utmost consternation. Our mortal faculties could not bear the overwhelming glory, with which it becomes the divine majesty to speak. When God was about to manifest his pleasure to his peculiar people, the sable clouds gathered, hoarse thunder roared, forked lightning flash'd, and a celestial trumpet struck all the army with amazement;

ment; God came down in the shape of fire, and the whole mountain opened a scene of terror. They saw the incircling flames, they heard his awful voice, and their mortality sunk under so magnificent an appearance; their natures were too weak to bear the splendor of the objects, or continue the correspondence, and therefore they entreat they may hear the voice of God no more, lest they die, and depute Moses, God's humble friend, to receive, and deliver to them, the councils of Heaven. Ye so terrible was the Mountain flaming with fire, and the sound of the shrill trumpet waxing louder, and louder, and the voice of words, that Moses himself says—I exceedingly fear and quake.

AND should God come down in such a splendid equipage, and deliver his councils to us; or should an angelic envoy (infinitely inferiour to himself) declare his sacred pleasure, the glory of the Deity, or even the splendor of the Seraphim, would dazzle and affright, rather than instruct and edify.

WHEN the Angels preach'd the joyful news of a Saviour to the poor shepherds, they were fore amazed.—But it is the good pleasure of the great God, to raise up to us Prophets from among our brethren, such as we can hear without confusion; who though they are in God's stead, and preach to us the way of salvation, are formed of the clay—are men of like passions with ourselves.
How

How different this, and how much more desirable, than to receive the messages of Heaven immediately from God, as Ezekiel did his vision, which was accompanied with whirlwinds, clouds and fire unfolding itself. What astonishing grace and goodness is displayed in that gentle and humane method, in which the glorious gospel is preached, compared with the awful solemnities with which the law was promulged ! Indeed in what manner soever God reveals his will, with whatever degree of clearness he manifests his gracious pleasure, it is a great favour to be instructed in it. The Jews of old were highly privileged, in that they had the oracles of God committed to them, and teachers to illustrate and expound them ; tho' this was a dispensation of great darkness and bondage, when viewed in competition with that of the Gospel, in which we have ministers of Christ for our teachers, whose office it is to display God's glorious grace, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Who preach not themselves,—do not aim at pleasing men, but cautiously guard against delivering their own sentiments, for the commandments of the Lord ; who seek not their own honor, but the profit of many, that they may be saved ; who seek not their own, but the spiritual riches of their people, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ, and seeking the glory that comes from God. Such ministers will offer nothing to their audience, besides what they can introduce with a—thus saith the Lord,—He that is true—He that is faithful saith these things. And who can at the close of every discourse adopt

dopt those beautiful expressions—Say I these things as a man, saith not the law of God—saith not the gospel of Christ the same also.

To have such a minister is a very great favour, and not the most common. We who have the honor to be embassadors from the court of Heaven, and whose peculiar business it is to preach Christ, and promote his kingdom, know how much selfishness is commonly mixt with our services; this was the case of the first ministers of Christ, when they were sent forth two by two; glory to God alone was not their motto. They looked at things temporal; and hence we find that upon the death of their Lord, they are immediately dispirited, give up all their fond hopes, and are for returning to their former employments. The kingdom they were in pursuit of vanishes like a dream. And disappointment will certainly attend every person, who enters the sacred service of the ministry, with a view of securing to himself a kingdom in this world,—disappointment in this world or the next, and perhaps in both.

INDEED 'tis very strange that such men as the Apostles—low in their extract, and mean in their profession; who were just taken from mending nets, from drawing and dressing fish; and who were even then in a low and despised condition of life; should be so bloated with pride, and enamoured with grandeur, that they no sooner get
sight

fight of an imaginary kingdom, than they immediately hope to be made prime ministers of state, and contend among themselves who shall share the greatest part of the Prince's favour. Alas! what is human nature, so foolish is man he would be wise, tho' he be born like the wild asses colt.—

BUT the great God knows how to overrule the weakness and vileness of man for his own glory. Sin is the most mortal foe to human happiness; by divine permission it entered and infected the whole race; but none of the called, faithful and chosen, in the morning of the resurrection, shall have the least reason to complain, or foolishly to charge God, for permitting Adam's fall. The glorious work of redemption shall bring all these things right. And God does any man a very great favour, confers on him the highest honor, to make him a subject and promoter of the kingdom of his grace—a preacher of Christ Jesus the Lord.

Now to preach Christ Jesus the Lord, does not consist in a frequent and pathetic repetition of his precious name, nor barely in insisting on those doctrines that are peculiarly His. But in pointing out, and proving the *glories of his person*, and his *divine operations*—his *perfect services* and *extreme sufferings*—his *gracious promises*, and *righteous precepts*—the *covenant of his grace*, and the *privileges bestowed on his church*, the *final judgment that shall issue from his mouth*.

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BUT

BUT who can conceive, much less describe the glories of his person—He is possessed of all the superiour beauties of Divinity. Every uncreated glory and excellency is in Christ, and that in the highest possible perfection. Untainted purity, unlimited wisdom, invariable righteousness, inviolable truth, inflexible justice, the richest mercy, and inexhaustible fulness are in Christ. He is all good—He is all great—He is truly God; possesses sameness of essence and glory with the Father.—The Father and the Son are incomprehensibly united, and ineffably distinguish'd; each infinite in every divine perfection, and different in the manner of their subsistence. Accordingly the Son's sacred character is exhibited to our view in a variety of passages in the sacred oracles, and all divine honors and perfections are ascribed to Him.

HE is also the Son of Man—came in the form of a servant, and the likeness of sinful flesh, had an human body and soul, and was possessed of all the inferiour beauties of humanity.

To determine any thing concerning the equality of the Father and the Son, or the union of the divine and human nature in the Son, beyond what is revealed, is what but few pretend. The causes in nature are very much out of our sight, concealed in impenetrable darkness: 'Tis therefore no wonder that men are puzzled, when they attempt to search out the unsearchable God. Wise Agur adores in the meditation of this inconceivable mystery, and
teaches

teaches us to do so, and not to break thro' to the Lord and gaze : Surely I have not the knowledge of the Mighty : What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell, every word of God is pure : Add thou not to his word, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. But the important truths of the gospel are to be preached, notwithstanding their being beyond our comprehension : And he who preaches Christ Jesus the Lord, must represent him in that light—not only the Anointed and Saviour—but God.

To preach Christ Jesus the Lord, is to represent the operations of his hands.

CREATION is a large field, in which one might easily lose himself. When we turn our eyes to the ethereal heavens, and contemplate those glistening beauties, with which the celestial canopy is bespangled ; concerning which Astronomers tell us such astonishing things respecting—their magnitudes and motions—periods and revolutions,—influences, distances, and dispositions towards each other. When we turn our thoughts to the atmosphere, and consider the use and necessity of that. When we view the earth, its bulk, situation, and various furniture—When we view the various animals that dwell on the face of it, and the waters under it ; and consider how they are form'd, supported and adapted to numerous and important ends. Especially, when we behold man—his body—with the faculties and duration of his soul.—They all point out the

unspeakable perfection of Christ, for in wisdom has he made them all.

IF we descend in our meditations to the great deep, consider how the waters are collected, and confined within immense and impassable banks of sand—how they accommodate and support an unnumbered variety of fish, and creeping things both small and great—how they serve to waft the produce and converse of one nation to another, for several thousand miles—and by their exhalations to water the earth, give drink to man and beast, and invigorate the whole vegetable creation—we shall readily join the Seraphim in their elevated song, holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, the whole earth is full of thy goodness, and so is the great and wide sea.

BUT it requires accuracy in astronomy, philosophy, and anatomy, to discourse properly on the various parts of creation: This is beyond my province and power. Indeed who can declare the works of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?

AND as Christ the Lord is represented as the maker of all things, so likewise the preserver and governor. By him do all things consist. He upholds, governs and preserves every thing that was made by him. His providence extends to every creature. The most exalted Archangel that shines in heaven, is not above his controul. The meanest reptile

reptile that grovels in the dust is not beneath his notice. The angelic hosts are the loyal subjects of his kingdom, and infernal fiends are confined by him in chains. He governs the various tribes of plants and animals, sways his scepter over the vegetative, sensitive, and mineral kingdoms. And man is his peculiar care. We are then certainly deficient in our duty to Christ, unless we ascribe to him the glory of creation, and providence.—But then we must be careful not so to preach Christ the Saviour, as to forget God the Father.

THE perfect services of Christ Jesus the Lord also demand a place in our publick discourses. These services come under a twofold consideration, respecting God the Father, and the ruined creature. All the divine perfections are displayed with the highest possible advantage in the face of Jesus Christ, or the glorious method of salvation by him. No scheme can be supposed so fully to magnify and make honorable the divine law, as this does. Even the vindictive holiness and justice of God appear amiable in the glorious oeconomy of divine grace; in consequence of which God has conferred on his Son the highest marks of honor and esteem, speaks of him, not only as the first, and best, and greatest of beings, but as his chosen servant, to accomplish the designs of his rich grace, among the children of men.

CHRIST

CHRIST JESUS the Lord has also done the greatest possible service for the children of men. In his life, we have the path to glory, and a title to blessedness. Christ was holy in his nature, harmless in his conduct, and undefiled by the world of sinners around him. He "cheerfully" fulfilled all righteousness, readily obeyed every "divine institution, and peaceably complied with" every laudable custom," kept days of fasting and prayer when he had no sin to repent of, or unruly passion to mortify; submitted to the ordinance of baptism, when he had neither original or contracted stain to wash away. His converse was sweet, candid and condescending. He used no austerities in dress or diet. His publick discourses were plain, edifying and important. He fed his flocks with the most useful truths, and in the most intelligible language. In a word, His life was composed of the most pleasant, necessary, and important duties, pointing out, and proceeding from the most intense love to God, and the most entire charity to man. Hereby he set us an example, that we should follow his steps; hereby we are freed from perplexity in our spiritual course. "The example of our Lord is like a sure guide to the bewildered traveller, or the pole star to the weather-beaten sailor."

By these services also he purchased our title to blessedness. Christ is become our surety in the court of heaven. To him the law looks, from him it has received perfect satisfaction; and by mutual

mutual compact between the Father and the Son, this righteousness was wrought out in the nature, room and stead of God's people; and God the Father is perfectly satisfied with it, as adequate to the demands of justice, and preservative of the honor of all his attributes: So that now all the seed of Israel may glory in Christ, forasmuch as in his perfect obedience, they have their title to perfect blessedness.

THE extreme sorrows, and unequalled sufferings of Christ Jesus the Lord, are next to be considered, according to our plan. The holy and just one was charged with the most shocking crimes; his enemies being judges, he had violated the law of God in diverse instances; cherished a design to subvert their temple and religion, to delude and seduce the people; was guilty of blasphemy, in assuming to himself the peculiar perfections of the Deity; was of a seditious, rebellious make, forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, and usurping the regal authority to himself: In a word, he was charged with the most shocking immoralities and horrid impieties. As such a person he was pursued and apprehended; tried, condemned and executed.

BUT who that bears his precious name can behold the awful scene? Who can patiently hear God accused by man of blasphemy, eternal wisdom aspersed with folly, truth itself impleaded of imposture, essential love made guilty of mischief, and supreme goodness stiled a malefactor?

WHO

Who without horror, indignation and grief, can behold infinite power trampled upon by impotent malice ; the heart of God bleeding, and the sole author of life expiring ? Well might the sun be confounded at the shocking scene, how could the avenging lightnings withhold their flashes ? The earth trembled at the horrid deed, and why did it not cleave asunder, and open a passage for those blood-thirsty wretches into the very abyss of hell ? Cursed be their anger for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel. O my soul, come thou not into their secret, mine honor be thou not united.

BUT O the fallacy of human schemes, and emptiness of carnal reasoning ! Nothing was ever more happy than this event, in divine providence, tho' its aspect was so dismal.

THE old serpent imagined he had carried his point, when he had brought Christ to his grave : Success seemed to have attended every cruel and cursed design. But, blessed be God, the Devil was ruined by his own success. And tho' Christ was charged with the most abominable Crimes, against God, Cæsar, and the people of the Jews ; yet Pilate, who was Cæsar's deputy in Judea, as judge, clears him from all the charges brought against him, and causes this inscription to be set over him, This is the King of the Jews. So that Pilate did not condemn him as a malefactor, but as the King of the Jews ; thereby fulfilling many
ancient

ancient prophecies that referr'd to the Messiah, who was to bear special relation to that people.

By the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, Christ dies for his people. His sorrows and sufferings, by divine appointment were for us. He endured all possible reproach, poverty, and persecution, as tho' he must wring out the very dregs of divine wrath, and swallow down the last drop of the cup of trembling.

Now when we review our Saviour's personal character, and consider his lot; and observe that these sorrows came rolling on him, in quick succession, by a decree of heaven. That the Father of mercies, instead of defending him from the wickedness of the age, delivered him to their malice. If he did not die under the weight of our sins, 'tis impossible to say what was meant by this heat of divine anger. This awful train of calamities could not be devolved upon Christ for his own sake; for he had ever done those things that pleased the Father. Neither does God punish any in an arbitrary manner. 'Tis not his disposition to laugh at the trial of the innocent, or destroy the perfect. And for any to deny, that in these extreme sorrows Christ represented his chosen people, is "to play the robber on God, pervert his word, destroy his people, and murder the only grace wherein we stand. There seems nothing but briars and thorns, a train of entanglements, to such as deny the satisfaction of Christ."

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BUT when we view Christ, as charged with the guilt of his people ; this at once accounts for the weight and terribleness of his sufferings, and for that astonishment of soul that seized him on their approach. This made him with so much earnestness deprecate that bitter cup. This made him offer up those strong cries and tears to him that was able. This made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. This is the mystery—this the miracle of Christ's passion ; we see him bleeding, and behold 'tis for our sins ! we hear him groan, and behold 'tis under the weight of them ! we see him weeping under the hidings of his Father's face, and find that our iniquities have drawn a thick cloud between him and his God ! It was the sins of his people that sharpened and invenomed the arrow that pierced his sacred bosom, and mingled the bitter cup. By his blood he quenched the wrath of heaven and the flames of hell. And it would surely be unpardonable in a christian minister, not to dwell much on these things.

THE gracious promises of Christ Jesus the Lord should also bear a part in our holy ministrations. These are exceeding great and precious. Christ, like a king, promises the blessings of this world, and the next, " provision, protection, preservation and consolation." He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from such as fear him, and walk uprightly.

BUT

BUT the great and comprehensive promise is this—I will be their God, and they shall be my people. This is the covenant, says God, that I will make with them. This is *all* the covenant I will make with them—I *will*—and they *shall*. A blessed covenant indeed, in which the principal becomes the surety of his people.

THE covenant of grace is also to be opened and improved by the ministers of Christ. This covenant is founded, not on the uncertain basis of man's free will, but on the "eternal purpose of God in the decree of election; the satisfaction, mediation, and intercession of Christ, the grace of the spirit, and the seed of God," and may well be termed everlasting and sure. In this covenant is the richest provision made for the pardon of sin, curing our spiritual maladies, subduing our enemies, supplying our wants, resolving our doubts, removing our difficulties, and answering every charge that can be brought against us.

MOREOVER, to open and inculcate the commands and precepts of Christ, is a part of our ministerial business. The sum and substance of the command is love to God and our neighbour; and these duties are founded in the highest reason. The perfections of God and his bounty to us, should render him truly amiable in our eyes. Besides rain from heaven and fruitful seasons—"God gives his word to instruct—his Son to redeem—his Spirit to sanctify—his power to protect

—his bounty to supply—and his consolations to support us in all our tribulation.” And why should we not love our neighbour according to the command—love thy neighbour as thyself. This points out the quality and measure of our love, and Christ has given us a new and surprising pattern, and we are to love one another even as Christ has loved us. These commands, containing love to God and our neighbour, are under the gospel frequently termed—the commandment of Christ—the commandment of God our Saviour; and such as preach Christ must open the nature, and press the observation of them.

ANOTHER very considerable branch of our publick discourses—is the privileges that Christ has bestowed on his church. O how great good has God laid up in store for them that love him! Among these privileges are contained—the seals and censures of the church. By one the believer comes near to Christ, by the other he keeps off the unclean thing, that he be not defiled with it.

THE seals of the covenant are baptism, and the Lord's supper. These are to be opened and explained; and the observation of them press'd on such as have right to them. The action in baptism is either sprinkling or plunging; 'tis to be performed in the name of the ever-adorable Trinity; to be administered by their authority, and bears special relation to their sacred character. " 'Tis a remarkable sign, and authentic seal of the

the covenant of grace," containing greatest benefits, and supposing correspondent duties.

THE holy supper is also to be opened, and the way to it made plain, the benefits resulting from it applied, and the importance of it urged. This sacrament, consisting of divine action, is plainly described in the gospels, and one of St. Paul's epistles. 'Tis designed as a lively memorial of our Saviour's death, and is most excellently calculated to beget, and increase in the christian, affections that are suitable to the awful tragedy. 'Tis a divine repast at which God sups with his people, and they with him. Here Christ bestows the most precious food; heavenly manna and water of life. By a proper attendance on this ordinance, is represented our mystical union to Christ, steady dependance on him, close adherence to him, and chearful and universal compliance with his pleasure. Hereby also is pointed out, the unity of the Church's faith, love, hope and fear, joy and sorrow.

THE censures of the church are also found among the privileges that Christ has bestowed on his people; were it not for these, churches would never keep themselves pure; but by the keys of the kingdom being put into the hands of the church, they are enabled to open the door of it, to such as appear proper subjects, and to shut it against such as evidently appear unworthy the sacred privileges of it. Hereby also the church is
impowered

impowered in a judicial way to turn out of her communion, every one whose conversation is infectious—conduct inconsistent, and abode in the church reproachful, and heinous. This privilege is a very desirable one, highly to be prized, consistently, and conscientiously to be improved. And when the seals and censures of the church are duly administered, and attended, the church may be said to be, a city well fortified, neat, compact, and beautiful; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks round about such a flock. He will be a refuge to her in times of trouble, and there is a river the streams whereof make glad this city of our God.

SUCH a church may be termed rich, in her present graces, and glorious in her future inheritance. And to add no more.

To preach Christ is to point out, prove and improve, the final judgment that shall issue from his mouth. Christ is ordained by God the Father to be judge both of the quick and dead. The Father judgeth no man, but has given to Christ authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man. Accordingly the prophet Daniel in his vision saw one like the son of man, cloathed with royal dignity. And the evangelical prophet speaking of Christ, says, the government shall be on his shoulders, and that he should order, and establish judgment forever. And reason depraved and imperfect as it is, points out the propriety, and expediency of Christ's judging the world. The
judge's

judge's countenance should be visible, and his voice audible, so that all parties may speak to him without confusion and amazement, and obtain entire satisfaction from him; and of Christ 'tis said, every eye shall see him. His countenance, tho' awful and bright, is sweet and mild. His voice, tho' omnipotent, is clear and calm, and those whose hearts are right with him, "shall behold him smiling with the most tender and transporting goodness," those whose hearts are far from him, shall observe numberless awful frowns in his angry countenance, that will strike their souls with utter despair, and kill their precious life with eternal death. The believer with humblest gratitude, shall acknowledge and adore the riches of divine grace; while the impenitent sinner with terror and horror, shall own his crimes, and confess 'tis just that he should be ruined forever. Then shall Christ say to all those who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith; who have been diligent, and industrious in the divine service, and stedfast in God's covenant—come ye blessed of my Father *inherit*, take possession of immortality, of life; wear an unfading crown of glory, become freemen of that kingdom, which can't be shaken, enter into unspeakable joy, and dwell in eternal bliss.—The poor and rich shall then meet together, and every one who has built on a good foundation, shall lay hold on eternal life.—

THEN also shall Christ say to those who would not have him to rule over them, depart ye cursed
into

into unquenchable fire. Let devils, and damned spirits be your associates, be encompassed with utter darkness, be plunged into a lake of burning brimstone, and possessed of disconsolateness, and extreme anguish. Pining sorrow, confounding shame, torturing fear, and racking despair, be thine eternal doom.

O THE blessed rest, the divine calm, the transports of joy, the peace, and calmness of the soul, who dwells with God! O desirable state, where blessedness and eternity are inseparable! O the joyful harmony among those glorify'd saints! Their language will be, this God is our God, and will be our God for ever and ever. The weight of their glory is infinite, the sweetness and security of their state is in God.

BUT O the universal confusion, and overwhelming amazement of the sinner. The judge will never reverse his sentence. And they shall never change their doom. The demerit of their crimes shall animate the never-dying worm, and the wrath of God shall blow up the ever-living flame. All affairs relative to time and probation, shall then cease, and Christ Jesus the Lord, having finish'd the work assigned him by the Father, shall resign the kingdom into his hand, that God may be all in all.

BUT

BUT my uncommon weakness, reminds me 'tis time to close, tho' custom forbids my leaving the desk, before I have in few words applied what has been said. And as my Brother, at whose desire I am the speaker, must be supposed the deepest concerned in what has been said, so he in decency is first to be addrest.

YOU are now, Sir, to be admitted a servant of Christ Jesus the Lord, in a peculiar sense, to be constituted his minister, officer, and immediate attendant. Your business will be to "approach his sacred person, to tread the courts of his house, and constantly to wait on his pleasure," and it will become you ever to appear in his livery.

YOU are to preach, not yourself, not to form any plan, or prosecute any design, but the kingdom and interest of Christ Jesus the Lord. You are to have no opinions of ours, or doctrines of other fallible mortals committed to you; but the doctrines of Christ, as they are contained in the Bible. The bible you are to receive, that, and *that only*, is to be the "rule of your faith, the guide of your life, and the plan of your sermons." Here you have a sure foundation, and other foundation can no man lay, Christ is the chief corner stone.

THE particle *the* is not original, and some read the words thus—we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord. We acknowledge him to be

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the only king of his church ; who alone has right to give laws to it, and prescribe forms of worship in it. And tho' it would ill become me to advise, more so to reprove in such an assembly as this ; yet when you view this world as apostate, and Christ Jesus the Lord setting up his kingdom among men, when you reflect on the order Christ gave his disciples just before his departure—go preach the *Gospel*, he that *believeth*, and view yourself as taking part of this ministry, you will readily conclude this to be all your business, that you are to call no man master on earth, and whenever you neglect to preach Christ, and promote his kingdom, you forfeit your character and cut yourself off from all succours and supplies, from all the precious promises of divine grace. But we hope in God, and are fully persuaded in our own minds, those of us especially, who have had the pleasure of a long and open acquaintance with you ; that you have received Christ Jesus the Lord. That He is precious to your soul. That you are speculatively and experimentally acquainted with the great truths of our holy religion. That you drink at the fountain, and will not be obliged to sip at streams. That you eat the bread of life yourself, and will hand down the same heavenly food to others.

God be surety for you my Brother, and then we shall not be ashamed of this our confidence. God enable you to see clearly into all gospel mysteries, and ever to act agreeable to your elevated
station

station in the church, may your word and walk be holy, and your conscience void of offence, providing honest things in the sight of God and all men.

You will not, Sir, by any mis-step wound your own conscience, destroy your character, pierce your friends, and do singular mischief to the church of God, which he has purchased with his blood.

You are entering on the labours of another, whose character is the most uncommon, who like his divine master, sought not the honor that came from men, shunn'd popular applause, seeking the glory that came from God. Who was content in his own sphere, and satisfied with the divine favour. Who had no disposition to Lord it over God's heritage, or to invade the office of his brethren : But was delighted in doing the will of Him who sent him, bringing immortal souls into the arms of divine mercy.—To copy his example, to imitate his deep devotion, and upright intentions, his indifferency to the world, and fervency with his God, his tenderness, and prudence among his people, will be much for your honor, and interest.

BUT the great pattern you are to set before you, is that of Christ Jesus the Lord. Labour after communion and fellowship with him, in ordinances and providences. Be tender of his people, spirit, and interest in the world.

BUT possibly your diffident heart may reply, *Who is sufficient for these things?* And for your encouragement and direction, let me tell you,—that tho' the youth shall faint, and young man fail, yet such as wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.—And tho' you may possibly spend your time and strength in vain as to this people (which supposition I unwillingly make) tho' you should not have the unspeakable pleasure of seeing of the travail of the Redeemer's soul in the success of your labour, yet if you are faithful to God, your pastoral charge, and your conscience, your judgment shall surely be with the Lord, and your work with your God. Tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall you be glorious.

Go forth, therefore, with humble chearfulness—go and prosper in the strength of the Lord, and in the end you shall receive eternal life.

AND as the church of Christ, at whose motion we are now met, may be supposed next in order to their elect pastor, in the sacred services of the day, so with propriety I now turn myself to them.

WE rejoice with you, Brethren, and give thanks to the great head of the church, that he has been pleased to look on your destitute circumstances, to pity you, provide, and send a man, as we trust, after his own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. God (whose ways
are

all perfect) broke you in a most grievous manner, in taking from your head, him, who was deservedly, so near your heart. You still have these things in remembrance, when you think on them, you pour out your souls within you. But God in mercy is returning, presents you with a man, to repair the breach, and make up the hedge ; and you ought to esteem it one of the greatest mercies, that God now offers you a pastor, who (we trust) will preach not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. Good ministers are found among the most precious outward mercies. To have one to be our minister, who knows Christ Jesus the Lord, and who, from his own experience, can recommend him, to friends and strangers, is surely a most desirable favour : Not that we are to suppose regeneration in the pastor essential to the success of his ministry. The gift of grace lies with Christ, and he can send by whom he pleaseth. He who fed Elijah with food from the mouth of an unclean bird, can send the most precious food to his own children, by the mouth of an unclean minister. Tho' the case of such a minister is most melancholy, similar to that of the Israelitish lord in Samaria, in the time of famine.—He feeds others, and pines, starves, and dies himself.

IF grace in a minister had been essential to the success of his ministrations, Christ would have given his churches, some certain marks, by which such ministers might be known. Not but that churches are to covet earnestly the best gifts ; and such as
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do not endeavour by all proper methods, to obtain a man of grace for their minister, greatly undervalue the grace of God ; such an one, we trust, you have, otherwise we could by no means lay our hands upon him.

AND now, Brethren, behold the man ! count him worthy of double honor, obey him, and submit yourselves to him, for he is to watch for your souls, and must give an account. The business of a watchman is truly great, he is obliged ever to be on his guard, wakeful and attentive, ready to give warning of approaching dangers. Like a shepherd, your minister must endure the various hardships, and fatigues of life, the inconveniencies of all weathers ; cold frosts, scorching heats, and painful travels ; must feed, guide, and defend ; seek the lost, and reduce such as have strayed, “ rectify your judgments, satisfy your scruples, remove your prejudices, bear your infirmities, and sympathize with you under your sorrows. He is to set up the standard against every enemy, to stop the encroachments of sin, to detect the pretences of impostors, and confute the fallacies of sophisters : He is to repel every adversary to the truth, and (if need be) to part with the dearest enjoyments of life, and even with life itself for your sake and the gospel.”

O THEN bear a part with him, in his hazardous, important, and arduous work. Afford him a good degree of security, liberty, and tranquility
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among you. Furnish him from time to time with reasonable supplies. Maintain his character, defend his name from contempt; let not his person or family run low among you. "The attendants on the King's person, and the officers of his court, are by special privileges, guarded from inconveniencies; and is it fitting that those who are engaged in the most honorable employments, and trusted with the special concernment of the court of Heaven, the priests, and stewards in God's house, the guides, rulers, and pastors of the church" should be sunk in their spirits, by penury and reproach. I know something by experience of the courage, and vigor, that a minister, feels, when he finds his character as a minister supported, and his motions for the honor of God, and the good of his church, seconded by his people; when the most powerful, and valuable are ready, upon all proper occasions, to defend, and support the name and family of the servant of the Lord. It gives new life to the minister's soul. He will thank God in his heart, take courage in his work, and go on his way rejoicing.

O THEN, Brethren, use your interest in Heaven, and on earth, for the success of the gospel, and the ordinances of it; as they will be dispensed by your minister. The honor of God, and the good of the church are deeply interested in it, and the nature of the thing requires it. And remember, when God cloaths his priests with salvation, his saints shall shout aloud for joy.

A FEW words to the whole assembly concludes my sermon.

As preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, is the duty of a minister, so union to Christ, and communion with him, is the happiness of a people. Labour then, Sirs, to experience the power, and grace of Christ, on your own hearts, and to possess the glorious liberty of God's children. To have fellowship with Christ in his life, and death, his acts, and offices, his righteousness and merits, his deadness to the world, and devotedness to God. To such no condemnation belongs. All things are theirs. They are compleat in Christ.

Now therefore, arise O Lord God, thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with salvation, and thy saints shout aloud for joy.

BLESSING and honor, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.

